(c) whether it is a fact that the subsidy corporations have been seeking permission from NTC for recruitment of trainee workers and operational staff;

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(e) whether the retrenched workers were paid their dues; if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) to (e) NTC has not *retrenched* 17,000 workers. However. NTC has abolished 14,180 posts from April, 1984 to September, 1986 under the labour rationalisation scheme which is not tantamount to retrenchment.

Mill-wise details of posts abolished are given in Annexure attached to this statement. [*See* Appendix CXL, Annexure No. 32]

The subsidiaries are empowered to fill-up operational posts subject to certain conditions and to take trainees/apprentices as required under the law.

Workers leaving employment under the labour rationalisation scheme have been paid statutory dues and dues admissible under the scheme.

Closure of NTC mills

*116. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to close down down some NTC mills;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what would be the fate of the workers of those mills and what is Government's plan to save the workers from unemployment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) to (c) No final decision has been taken to close down any NTC mills so far.

Setting up of a currency notes press at Panagarh, in West Bengal

*117. SHRI VITHALBHAI MOTI. RAM PATEL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to set up a currency note press at Panagarh in West Bengal;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Panagarh is close to the international border of Bangladesh;

(c) whether it is desirable to set up a currency press near international border; and

(d) what is the opinion of the experts in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) to (d) Panagarh in West Bengal had been identified tentatively as a possible site along with others for locating a new Bank note press. While the need for augmenting Bank note Press capacity has been clearly established, various aspects like optimum capacity per unit, demand distribution etc. which have a bearing on the location are yet to be fully gone into. The point made by Hon'ble member also be taken into account while taking a final decision on the location.

Purchase of Cotton by the Cotton Corporation of India

*118. SHRIMATI PRATIBHA DEVISINGH PATIL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have directed the Cotton Corporation of India to purchase sufficient quantity of cotton with a view to ensuring its

availability to the textile industry throughout the season; and

(b) if so, what are the details of purchases made by the Corporation during 1986 and so far during 1986 and to what extent the decline in cotton price in local market has been arrested as a result of the purchases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) The Cotton Corporation of India has been directed to purchase cotton at support prices without any restriction on quantity. The Corporation undertakes price support operation whenever the prices tend to fall below the minimum support prices. This cotton is sold to various segments of the textiles industry including the National Textile Corporation, State Textile Corporation, Khadi and Village Industries Commission etc.

(b) The Corporation purchased 15.56 lakh bales in 1985-86 (September, 1985 to August, 1986) and 63,366 bales during 1986-87 (from 1st Sept '86 to 6th November, 1986). The support price operations of Cotton Corporation of India are intended to ensure that the prices do not fall below the minimum support prices fixed by the Government.

Production of low-priced blended cloth

*119. SHRI NARESH C PUGLIA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any scheme for the production of low-priced blended cloth in the handloom sector for implementation by the States;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what price has been fixed for such cloth?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The "Susman Cloth Scheme" envisages production of cheap polyester blended cloth made from duty free polyester fibre. The guidelines issued by Government provide that the scheme will be implemented by the State Handloom Apex Societies and State Handloom Development Corporations. The range of products will include bleached and dyed polyester blended shirtings and suitings which will be sold only through retail outlets operated directly by the approved implementing agencies.

(c) The maximum prices fixed for the products are Rs. 25/- per square metre for shirting and Rs. 40/- per square metre for suiting.

Bifurcation of FERA

*120. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:
SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry have recently made certain suggestions to Government for the bifurcation of the contents of FERA;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have considered these suggestions; and if so, what decision has been taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) ASSOCHAM has suggested bifurcation of the contents of FERA into two separate enactments. The